

# *America's*

## *Patriotic Music Companion Fact Book*

The Chronological History of our  
Favorite Traditional American Patriotic Songs  
By Dale V. Nobbman



Note: Due to copyright restrictions the words and music to  
"God Bless America" and "The U.S. Air Force" are not included in this book

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# The Liberty Song

Words by: John Dickinson (1732-1808) in 1768  
Composed by: William Boyce (1711-1779) in 1759

**T**his colonial song of defiance is sometimes referred to as "*the first American patriotic song*." It was written by Philadelphia lawyer-farmer, John Dickinson, in 1768, and set to a 1759 English tune "*Heart of Oak*" by William Boyce. The original full title of the song was "*The Liberty Song--In Freedom We're Born*." The song's inspiration came from the "Circular Letter" which was distributed in February 1768 imposing duties and taxes upon the colonists. One of the verses reads: "Not as slaves but as freemen our money we'll give." Mein & Fleming published Dickinson's song in Boston and the words appeared for the first time with Boyce's melody in Bickerstaff's *Boston Almanac*, in 1769.

Dickinson was born near the village of Trappe, Maryland. When he was eight years old his family moved to near Dover, Delaware. He studied law and was admitted to the Delaware Bar in 1753. Then in 1757 he became a prominent lawyer in Philadelphia. Dickinson held a legislative seat for both Pennsylvania and Delaware beginning in 1762. During the years of 1767-68, Dickinson wrote a series of newspaper articles in the *Pennsylvania Chronicle* that came to be known collectively as *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania*. They attacked British taxation policy and urged resistance to laws Dickinson felt were unjust. The letters became so popular in the colonies that Dickinson became America's first native political hero. It was at this time that he wrote the words to the "*Liberty Song*." Dickinson was also a member of the First Continental Congress.

William Boyce was born in London and became an English composer of numerous symphonies, concerti, overtures, theatrical music for plays, church service music and anthems. At the age of twelve William began his musical education as a chorister at St. Paul's Cathedral. In 1735 he took his first organist position at the Oxford Chapel in London. A year later he became composer to the Chapel Royal. In this post he composed some of his greatest anthems and church music. To commemorate the British victories against the French in 1759, Boyce wrote what was to become one of his most famous songs "*Heart of Oak*", written for a pantomime *Harlequin's Invasion*. Boyce retired in 1769 due to increasing deafness, and for the next few years worked at editing his famous collection of music titled "*Cathedral Music*."



## Historical Setting for: "The Liberty Song"

*The first music store in America was opened in Philadelphia on December 13, 1759.*  
*The first life insurance company in America was established in Philadelphia in 1759.*  
*The first Methodist Church in America was dedicated on October 30, 1768 in New York.*  
*British troops landed in Boston on October 1, 1768.*





# The Liberty Song

*Vigorously*

Words by John Dickinson  
Music by William Boyce

1. Come, join hand in hand, brave A - mer - i - cans all, And  
2. Our wor - thy fore - fa - thers, let's give them a cheer, To

rouse your bold hearts at fair Lib - er - ty's call; No tyr - an - nous acts shall sup -  
cli - mates un - known did cou - ra - geous - ly steer, Thro' o - ceans to des - erts for

press your just claim, Or stain with dis - hon - or A - mer - i - ca's name. In \_\_\_\_  
Free - dom they came, And dy - ing, be - queath'd us their free - dom and fame. In \_\_\_\_

Free - dom we're born and in Free - dom we'll live. Our pur - ses are \_\_\_\_ read - y.

Stead - y, friends, stead - y, Not as slaves, \_\_\_\_ but as Free - men our mon - ey we'll give. \_\_\_\_

3. The tree their own hands had to Liberty rear'd,  
They lived to behold growing strong and revered;  
With transport they cried, "Now our wishes we gain,  
For our children shall gather the fruits of our pain."  
*Chorus*

4. Then join hand in hand, brave Americans all,  
By uniting we stand, by dividing we fall;  
In so righteous a cause let us hope to succeed,  
For heaven approves of each generous deed.  
*Chorus*

## CHORUS

In freedom we're born and in Freedom we'll live.  
Our purses are ready,  
Steady, friends, steady;  
Not as slaves, but as Freemen our money we'll give.

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# Chester

*Words & Music by: William Billings (1746-1800) in 1778*

**T**his is one of the earliest popular patriotic songs in America. It has been referred to as “the Marseillaise of the Revolutionary War”. An alternate title for the song was “*Let Tyrants Shake Their Iron Rod.*”

The author and composer, William Billings, was born in Boston with a withered arm, legs of uneven length, vision in only one eye, and a raspy voice. He became a tanner by profession, but music was always his passion. Billings was considered peculiar, because he notated his music in chalk on the walls or on pieces of leather in his tannery. Eventually, he gave up tannery for music, and in doing so became America’s first native born professional musician. In 1774, Billings formed the first singing class in the colonies and became known as the “Father of the singing school”. He also organized the first American church choir.

Billings was a friend of Samuel Adams and Paul Revere and believed strongly in the need for revolting against Britain. He became one of the most fervent patriots during the Revolutionary War, and put his gift for writing patriotic songs to good use. He wrote war songs to inflame the fighting spirit of the colonists, often creating patriotic lyrics to be sung with his own psalm and hymn tunes from his 1770 “*New England Psalm Singer*” and “*The Singing Master’s Assistant*” song collection published in 1778. “Chester” appeared in the 1770 song collection with religious words by Isaac Watts, but Billings’s patriotic words and the current melody for “Chester” came from “*The Singing Master’s Assistant*”. It was sung by colonial soldiers in camps and on the march into battle, thus becoming America’s first popular war song.

Billings published a total of six song collections. In addition to the first two mentioned above there were: *Music in Miniature* (1779), *The Psalm Singer’s Amusement* (1781), *The Suffolk Harmony* (1786), and *The Continental Harmony* (1794).

Despite all the things that Billings accomplished, he died in poverty in 1800 and was buried in the Boston Common in an unmarked grave.



## Historical Setting for: “Chester”

*The U.S. signed a ‘Treaty of Alliance’ with France in 1778.  
The U.S. Secret Service was organized in 1778.*





## Chester

*Sturdily*

*Words and Music by William Billings*

1. Let ty - rants shake on their i - ron  
2. The Foe comes on with haugh - ty

rod, stride. And Our Slav - 'ry ad - clank her  
rod, stride. And Our troops ad - vance with

gall - ing chains. We fear them not; we  
mar - tial noise. Their Vet - 'rans flee be -

trust in God, New Eng - land's  
for our Youth, And Gen - 'rals

God yield for - ev er reigns.  
yield to beard less boys.

3. Howe and Burgoyne, and Clinton, too,  
With Prescott and Cornwallis join'd,  
Together plot our overthrow,  
In one infernal league combin'd.



4. What grateful off'ring shall we bring?  
What shall we render to this Lord?  
Loud Hallelujah let us sing,  
And praise His Name on ev'ry Chord.

5. When God inspired us for the fight,  
Their ranks were broke, their lines were forced,  
Their ships were shattered in our sight,  
Or swiftly driven from our coast.

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# The Star-Spangled Banner

Words by: Francis Scott Key (1779-1843) in 1814  
Music by: John Stafford Smith (1750-1836) in 1775  
Original Title: "The Defense of Fort McHenry"

**I**n the summer of 1814, during the War of 1812, the British fleet was anchored off the city of Baltimore, facing Fort McHenry. That September, a Maryland physician, Dr. William Beanes, was captured by the British and held prisoner on the British flagship, the "Surprise." Beanes had served with General Washington during the American Revolution and looked after Washington's men at Valley Forge. Francis Scott Key, a young Baltimore lawyer, headed a truce commission to negotiate Dr. Beanes' release. The party was treated cordially, but since the British were just then planning a secret attack on Fort McHenry, they refused to allow the party to leave ship until the battle had ended. During the day and night of September 13-14, from the vantage point of a small ship named the "Minden," five miles from Ft. McHenry, Key watched the blistering attack on the fort through powerful field glasses. When, at 7 a.m. on the 14<sup>th</sup>, he saw the 42 feet long and 30 feet wide American flag still flying atop the fort, his excitement found outlet in verses, which he then and there scribbled on an envelope in a matter of a few minutes. Key fitted his verses to the melody from "*To Anacreon in Heaven*" by John Stafford Smith. Key may have had this tune in mind when he wrote the words, because he had used the tune once before in 1805 with another of his poems. After Key returned to the Indian Queen Hotel in Baltimore, he wrote a neatly written manuscript copy of his song "*The Star-Spangled Banner*" which is now in the possession of the Maryland Historical Society. (Key hand wrote other copies of our future national anthem. One copy is in the Library of Congress and another is at the Pennsylvania Historical Society.)

The day after the termination of the battle of Fort McHenry, Key's verses were printed on a broadside under the title of "*The Defense of Fort McHenry*," and distributed in the streets. Ferdinand Durang sang the song that same evening in a Baltimore tavern where it proved so successful that for the next few weeks it was heard there regularly. On September 20, Key's verses appeared in a Baltimore newspaper, "The Patriot", which remarked editorially: "The following beautiful and animatory effusion, which is destined long to outlast the occasion and outlive the impulse which produced it, has already been extensively circulated." Another Baltimore newspaper, *The American*, printed the poem a day later. Early in 1815 the song acquired its enduring title "*The Star-Spangled Banner*." The anthem became popular throughout the East after the Civil War, and throughout the rest of the country after the Spanish-American War. For many years both the Army and the Navy regarded it as our national anthem, before it was officially made so by an act of Congress on March 3, 1931. The 200-pound flag (with stripes two feet wide) that flew over Ft. McHenry during the famous battle can now be viewed at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.





Francis Scott Key was born in Frederick County, Maryland, the son of a Continental Army officer. Throughout his life Francis was known as a fine spiritual gentleman and for many years was an active lay-leader in St. John's Episcopal Church in Georgetown. From his youth, Francis wrote verses as a hobby, however, he never took his poetry writing seriously. One of his ancestors, John Key, had been an English poet laureate. Key began practicing law in 1802 and served as the U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia from 1833 to 1841. A flag is permitted to fly both night and day over his grave at Frederick, Maryland.

John Stafford Smith was born in Gloucester, England and studied music under William Boyce. Smith became a composer at the Chapel Royal in London, and a musicologist. Smith was a composer for the Covent Garden Theater and the conductor of the Academy of Ancient Music. He composed anthems, glees, and songs, including his 1775 "To Anacreon in Heaven," later used as the tune for "The Star-Spangled Banner."



### Historical Setting for: **"The Star-Spangled Banner"**

*The Second Continental Congress chose George Washington commander in chief of the Continental Army on June 15, 1775.*

*The U.S. postal system was established on July 26, 1775, with Benjamin Franklin serving as the first postmaster general.*

*The Treaty of Ghent was signed on December 24, 1814, ending the War of 1812.*

*The Battle of New Orleans, the most famous battle of the War of 1812, was fought on January 8, 1815 two weeks after the Treaty of Ghent had ended the war officially.*

*President Herbert Hoover signed the act making "The Star-Spangled Banner" the U.S. national anthem on March 3, 1931.*



# The Star Spangled Banner

*With spirit, not too slow*

*Words by Francis Scott Key  
Music by John Stafford Smith*

Oh, say can you see, by the dawn's ear - ly light, What so  
proud - ly we hailed at the twi - light's last gleam - ing? Whose broad stripes and bright  
stars, thro' the per - il - ous fight, O'er the ram - parts we watched were so  
gal - lant - ly stream - ing? And the rock - ets red glare, the bombs  
burst - ing in air, Gave proof thro' the night that our flag was still

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## The Star Spangled Banner

*Chorus*

D G Am G C E7 Am E7 Am C#dim

there. Oh say does that star - span - gled ban - ner yet

G D D7 G D G D7 G Em A7 G D7 G

wave O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

2. On the shore dim-ly seen  
through the mist of the deep,  
Where the foe's haugh-ty host  
in dread si-lence re-pos-es,  
What is that which the breeze,  
o'er the towering steep,  
as it fit-ful-ly blows,  
half con-ceals, half dis-clos-es?  
Now it catches the gleam  
of the morning's first beam,  
In full glo-ry re-lect-ed,  
now shines on the stream;

3. Oh, thus be it ever,  
when freemen shall stand  
Between their loved homes  
and the war's desolation,  
Blessed with vict'ry and peace,  
may the heav'n rescued land  
Praise the pow'r that hath  
made and preserved us a nation  
Then conquer we must,  
when our cause it is just,  
And this be our motto,  
"In God is our trust!"

### CHORUS

2. 'Tis the star spangled banner!  
Oh long may it wave  
O'er the land of the free  
and the home of the brave!

3. And the star spangled banner  
in triumph shall wave  
O'er the land of the free  
and the home of the brave!

## THERE'S A STAR SPANGLED BANNER WAVING SOMEWHERE

As sung by ELTON JOHN on MCA Records The 6 9000

By  
PAUL ROBERTS  
and  
SHEDDY DARNELL







# America (My Country 'tis of Thee)

Words by: Samuel Francis Smith (1808-1895) in 1831

Melody to "God Save The King" from 1744

**S**amuel Francis Smith wrote this song in 1831 and it has always been sung to the melody of the British national anthem "God Save The King", a melody traced back to "*Thesaurus Musicus*" from 1744 and has been used with the British national anthem since that time. The tune was first published in America in 1761.

Smith was born in Boston, and while he was a student at Andover Theological Seminary in Massachusetts, the famous music educator, Lowell Mason, gave him an assignment to write a children's choir song. This task resulted in an inspiration to write a patriotic hymn and it only took Smith about a half hour to write the words. Smith later retold the account by saying "on a dismal day in February, 1831, turning over the leaves of a German music book, I fell in love with a tune titled "*Heil dir im Siegerkranz*", which pleased me by its simple and natural movement and I was instantly inspired to write a patriotic hymn of my own...I seized a scrap of waste paper and began to write. In half an hour, I think, the words stood upon it, substantially as they are sung today. I had not thought of writing a national hymn. I laid the song aside and nearly forgot I had made it. If I had anticipated the future of it, doubtless I would have taken more pains with it. Such as it is, I am glad to have contributed this mite to the cause of American freedom." Smith did not initially realize he had used the melody to the British national anthem with his new song and was surprised when he was later accused of being pro-British because he had used the tune.

A 500 member children's choir at the Park Street Church in Boston had the honor of singing the song for the first time in public on July 4, 1831. An account of this performance was reported in the *Christian Watchman* of July 8, 1831. Lowell Mason published "*My Country 'Tis of Thee*" in his song collection "*The Choir, or Union Collection of Church Music*" in 1832. In *The Boston Academy* book of 1836 the song was printed with the title "*America, National Hymn*" and that is the reason why it is sometimes simply titled as "*America*."

It was not long before "*My Country, 'Tis of Thee*" was being sung at patriotic rallies, in schools and at picnics. It became particularly popular during the Civil War, sung at war rallies, memorials, meetings and funerals, as well as in army camps and on the field of battle.

Smith was a classmate of Oliver Wendell Holmes at Harvard from where they graduated in 1829. He became a Baptist minister in 1834, serving churches at Waterville, Maine between 1834-42 and in Newton, Massachusetts between 1842-54. Smith held a lifelong interest in hymnology and is credited with having written about 100 hymns. In 1843, he helped compile "*The Psalmist*", the most widely used Baptist hymnal of its day.





In 1914, Smith's son presented the original "scrap of paper" manuscript of "*My Country 'Tis of Thee*" to the library of Harvard University. Many other original autographed copies of Smith's words still exist, and as he wrote out each copy he was very careful to preserve the original wording and punctuation.



### Historical Setting for: **"America (My Country 'tis of Thee)"**

*The King George War, between England and France, broke out in America in 1744.  
Wm. Driver first coined the term 'Old Glory', denoting the U.S. flag, in 1831.  
Andrew Jackson was re-elected President of the United States in 1832.*







# America

(My Country 'Tis of Thee)

*Moderato*

Words by Samuel F. Smith  
Music by M. Henry Carey

1. My coun - try 'Tis of thee, Sweet land of the  
2. My na - tive coun - try, thee, land of the

lib - er - ty, Of thee I sing; Land where my  
no - ble free, Thy name I love; I love thy

fath - er died, Land of the Pil - grims' pride,  
rocks and hills, Thy woods and tem - led hills

From ev - 'ry moun - tain side let free - dom ring!  
My heart with ra - ture thrills like that a - bove.

3. Let music swell the breeze  
And ring from all the trees,  
Sweet freedom's song;  
Let mortal tongues awake,  
Let all that breathe partake,  
Let rocks their silence break,  
The sound prolong.

4. Our father's God, to thee,  
Author of liberty,  
To thee we sing;  
Long may our land be bright  
With freedom's holy light;  
Protect us by thy might  
Great God our King!

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# The Battle Cry of Freedom

Words & Music by: George Frederick Root (1820-1895) in 1863

**T**he author and composer of this song, George Frederick Root, was born in Sheffield, Massachusetts. He began his music career at age 19 by alternately serving as an organist, vocal music teacher and music editor. In 1845, Root went to New York and taught music at the Abbott Institute for Young Ladies. He was a pioneer in the field of music education in the public schools and one of the founders of the New York Normal Institute, which trained music teachers. Then, in 1851, in his thirty-first year, he started writing the words and melodies for popular songs using his penname "Wurzel" (meaning "root" in German.) Root began working at the music firm of "Root & Cady" in 1859, which was founded by his brother a year earlier. Root was already a noted song composer when the Civil War began and he started writing war songs. "*The Battle Cry of Freedom*" was the second war song written by Root, but was soon followed by others such as "*Just Before the Battle, Mother*" and "*Tramp, Tramp, Tramp*." He composed several hundred songs over his long writing career and helped in the publication of 75 music collections.

The inspiration for "*The Battle Cry of Freedom*" was Abraham Lincoln's second call for volunteers, which met with little response. Something was needed to inspire the citizens and Root felt that a new rallying song would do the trick. It took him a very short time to complete the words and music to this song. At that time, Root was his brother's partner in the Chicago music shop of Root & Cady. On the day after he wrote this song, a singing duo, Frank and Jules Lombard, came to the music shop seeking a good war song for a program scheduled that day for a rally in the Chicago Court House Square. The Lombards selected Root's new song for their performance and it was an immediate success. A famous group of concert singers, the Hutchinson Family, included the song in their own programs during their tours. The song then became popular with the Union army and was to become Root's most famous war song. President Lincoln recognized the value of this song by writing to Root: "You have done more than a hundred generals and a thousand orators. If you could not shoulder a musket in defense of your country, you certainly have served her through songs."

After the Civil War, Root continued to work for the Root & Cady firm and was honored with the degree of Doctor of Music by the University of Chicago in 1872.



## Historical Setting for: "*The Battle Cry of Freedom*"

*President Lincoln issued his 'Emancipation Proclamation' on January 1, 1863.*

*The Battle of Gettysburg took place July 1 through July 3 in 1863.*

*Abraham Lincoln delivered his Gettysburg Address on November 19, 1863.*





## The Battle-Cry of Freedom

*Moderate*

*Words and Music by George F. Root*

1. Yes, we'll ral - ly 'round the flag, boys, we'll ral - ly once a - gain,  
Shout - ing the bat - tle cry of free - dom; We will ral - ly from the hill - side, we'll  
gath - er from the plain, Shout - ing the bat - tle cry of  
*Chorus*  
free - dom. The Un - ion for-ev - er, hur - rah, boys, hur - rah!  
Down with the trai - tor, Up with the star; While we ral - ly 'round the flag, boys,  
ral - ly once a - gain, Shout - ing the bat - tle - cry of free - dom.

2. We will welcome to our numbers the loyal, true, and brave,  
Shouting the battle cry of freedom; And altho' they may be poor,  
not a man shall be a slave, Shouting the battle cry of freedom.
3. So we're springing to the call from the East and from the West,  
Shouting the battle cry of freedom; And we'll prove a loyal crew  
for the land we love the best, Shouting the battle cry of freedom.

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# America The Beautiful

*Words by:* Katharine Lee Bates (1859-1929) in 1895

*Music by:* Samuel Augustus Ward (1847-1903) in 1882

**K**atharine Lee Bates was born in Falmouth, Massachusetts. Her British and Irish direct ancestors came to America only fifteen years after the arrival of the Mayflower Pilgrims. She taught at Wellesley College from 1886 to 1925, after graduating from that educational institution in 1880 and teaching high school for six years.

Miss Bates was a professor at Wellesley when she was invited to lecture at Colorado College in Colorado Springs, and it was while in Colorado that she wrote the verses of this hymn after paying a brief visit to Pike's Peak by wagon in the summer of 1893. Bates later recalled, "Those of us who were not young enough to climb on foot, nor brave enough to ride a donkey, got aboard the prairie wagon. This was an old spring-less wagon, painted on each side with 'Pike's Peak or Bust,' and drawn first by horses, later by mules." She was so moved by the grandeur of the view from the summit that she was inspired to write her famous poem. Bates later recalled "it was there, as I was looking out over the sea-like expanse of fertile country spreading away so far under the ample skies, that the opening lines of this text formed themselves in my mind." Later in 1893, Miss Bates visited the Columbian Exposition of the World's Fair in Chicago. On the site of this exposition, magnificent buildings by Daniel Burnham were erected. Bates later wrote, "The expression 'Alabaster Cities' was the direct result of this visit. It made such a strong appeal to my patriotic feelings that it was, in no small degree, responsible for at least the last stanza. It was my desire to compare the unusual beauties of God's nature in this country with the distinctive spectacles created by man." She would add, "We must match the greatness of our country with the goodness of personal godly living. If only we could couple the daring of the Pilgrims with the moral teachings of Moses, we would have something in this country that no one could ever take from us."

After writing the first draft of her famous poem in 1893, Bates tucked it into her notebook, went back to work in New England, and did not get the poem out again until two years later. Her poem was first published in "*The Congregationalist*," a Boston magazine, on July 4, 1895. Several years later, Miss Bates rewrote the text, simplifying the phraseology, and this revised version was first printed in the "*Boston Evening Transcript*" on November 19, 1904. Bates made additional minor revisions in 1918, the year in which she wrote a history of the hymn for the library of the Boston Athenaeum, therefore producing the song, as we know it today. The finalized hymn gained widespread popularity during World War I. Miss Bates said: "That this hymn has gained, in less than twenty years, such a hold as it has upon our people, is clearly due to the fact that Americans are at heart idealists, with a fundamental faith in human brotherhood."





After several tunes had been tried with the text, eventually, the words by Bates were linked with the melody of "Materna," (meaning "motherly") by Samuel A. Ward, written in 1882. Ward wrote the tune while crossing New York harbor to Coney Island and it was used during the time he served as organist at the Grace Episcopal Church in Newark, New Jersey. The tune was first published in "The Parish Choir" in Boston on July 12, 1888, as a setting for the hymn "O Mother Dear Jerusalem." Then, in 1912, permission from Ward's widow made it possible to join his tune with Bates' text. In 1926 the National Federation of Music Clubs conducted a contest for the best musical setting to Bates' poem. Although some nine hundred entries were submitted none seemed as suitable as Ward's "Materna."

The composer, Samuel Ward, received training in music early in life in New York City. He became a New Jersey music businessman after founding a retail music store in Newark.



### Historical Setting for: **"America The Beautiful"**

*The first Labor Day parade was held in New York City in 1882.*

*Mark Twain published his book 'The Prince and the Pauper' in 1882.*

*Grover Cleveland was inaugurated President of the United States in 1893.*

*Flag Day was first officially observed in the city of Philadelphia in 1893.*

*The first patent for a gasoline-driven automobile was issued to Charles Duryea in 1895.*

*The first professional football game was played in Pennsylvania in 1895.*

*Theodore Roosevelt was re-elected President of the United States in 1904.*

*Cy Young pitched the first 'perfect game' in professional baseball in 1904.*

*Woodrow Wilson was elected President of the United States in 1912.*

*The British liner, Titanic, struck an iceberg and sank in 1912.*

*Woodrow Wilson was still President of the United States in 1918.*

*The first issue of 'Stars and Stripes', the Army newspaper, was published in 1918.*



# America the Beautiful

*Moderato*

*Words by Katherine Lee Bates  
Music by Samuel A. Ward*

1. O beau - ti - ful for spa - cious skies, For am - ber waves of  
grain, For pur - ple moun - tain ma - jes - ties a -  
bove the fruit - ed plain, A - mer - i - ca! A -  
mer - i - ca! God shed his grace on thee, And  
crown thy good with broth - er - hood from sea to shin - ing sea.

2. O beautiful for Pilgrims feet  
whose stern impassioned stress,  
A thoroughfare for freedom beat  
across the wilderness.  
America! America!  
God mend thine ev'ry flaw,  
Confirm thy soul in self control,  
thy liberty in law.

3. O beautiful for heroes prov'd  
in liberating strife,  
Who more than self their country loved  
and mercy more than life.  
America! America!  
May God thy gold refine  
Till all success by nobleness  
and ev'ry gain divine.

4. O beautiful for patriot dream  
that sees beyond the years,  
Thine alabaster cities gleam,  
undimmed by human tears.  
America! America!  
God shed his grace on thee,  
And crown thy good with brotherhood  
from sea to shining sea.

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# You're A Grand Old Flag

*Written & Composed by: George Michael Cohan (1878-1942) in 1906*  
*Original Title: "You're A Grand Old Rag"*

**G**eorge Cohan wrote this song for the musical show "George Washington, Jr." in which he himself played the leading role of a patriot who assumes the name of the first President of the United States. One of Cohan's routines was to drape an American flag around his body and run up and down the stage singing the praises of country and flag. While in the process of writing songs for this show Cohan remembered having talked to a veteran, color-bearer of Pickett's charge at Gettysburg (1863) who pointed to the American flag and remarked, "She's a grand old rag." This gave Cohan the inspiration for the title "You're A Grand Old Rag." After opening night on February 12 at the Herald Square Theatre in New York, Cohan received vigorous complaints from patriotic organizations charging him with degrading our flag by terming it a *rag*. As a dedicated flag-waver, Cohan was somewhat chagrined. He promptly changed the objectionable word "rag" to *flag* and the show continued on, with "*You're A Grand Old Flag*" becoming the hit song of the show.

Cohan performed the song in the 1932 movie "The Phantom President", and in 1942 the song was used in the movie based on Cohan's life "Yankee Doodle Dandy."



Historical Setting for: **"You're A Grand Old Flag"**

*The devastating San Francisco earthquake occurred on the morning of April 18, 1906.*  
*Zane Grey wrote his first western novel 'The Spirit of the Border' in 1906.*



## You're a Grand Old Flag

Moderate

Words and Music by George Michael Cohan

G C G D<sup>7</sup> G Bm G D<sup>7</sup> G D<sup>7</sup>

You're a grand old flag, you're a high fly - ing flag; And for - ev - er, in

G Ddim D<sup>7</sup> Am<sup>7</sup> D<sup>7</sup> Am<sup>7</sup> D<sup>7</sup> G B<sup>7</sup>

peace, may you wave; \_\_\_\_\_ You're the em - blem of the land I

Em Em<sup>7</sup> A<sup>7</sup> D<sup>7</sup> Am F<sup>7</sup> D<sup>7</sup>

love, The home of the free and the brave. \_\_\_\_\_ Ev - 'ry

G C G D<sup>7</sup> G Bm G Bm G<sup>7</sup> E<sup>7</sup>

heart beats true, un - der Red, White and Blue; Where there's nev - er a boast or

Am D<sup>7</sup> G D<sup>7</sup> G D<sup>7</sup> Ddim D<sup>7</sup>

brag; \_\_\_\_\_ But, should auld ac - quaint - ance be for - got, Keep your

A<sup>7</sup> C Cm D<sup>7</sup> 1. G D<sup>7</sup> 2. G

eye on the grand old flag. You're a flag. \_\_\_\_\_

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